

**AIR FORCE MEDIA CONTEST  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
JANUARY 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2003**

The Air Force Media Contest is sponsored annually by the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs, and is conducted by the Air Force News Service at Headquarters Air Force News Agency, San Antonio, Texas. The 2003 contest is the 48th such competition. Awards are presented to *units and individuals* for outstanding achievements in: furthering the objectives of the Air Force internal information program; promoting a fuller understanding of the missions of the Air Force; and for informing military men and women about current events, their heritage as American citizens, and the vital roles they play in the defense of the nation and the preservation of freedom and democracy.

A list of target dates is provided as Attachment 1.

**I. ELIGIBILITY**

A. Entries must have been published between January 1 and December 31, 2003.

B. MAJCOM and Service headquarters personnel and personnel assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense or its elements (in selected assignments, such as the military news services) may compete only in the Air Force Print Journalist of the Year category.

C. The following products may not be entered in the contest: civilian enterprise guides and directories; yearbooks; cruise books; publications and productions funded by non-appropriated funds; commercially produced, contracted and mixed productions (for example, those produced part in-house and part by contractors) and products created primarily for public media or community relations programs.

D. Print Media eligibility:

1. Military units, personnel and civilian employees of Armed Forces newspapers published under Department of Defense Instruction 5120.4 and Air Force Instruction 35-101 are eligible to submit entries through their respective commands. This includes the National Guard and Reserve.

2. Contract writers and photographers employed by civilian enterprise publishers, as well as stringers with no formal affiliation to the newspaper, may enter Print Media categories L and M. This includes contributions by "guest" writers and photographers not ordinarily engaged in public affairs activities.

3. Personnel assigned to the *Stars and Stripes* newspapers are not eligible to participate.

4. Staff members of Unified Command publications (except *Stars and Stripes*) may enter print categories E through K, Q and R through their respective Services. The command may enter its publication in category A, B, C, D or P through the Service funding the command.

5. MAJCOMS must ensure that entries meet eligibility criteria, DOD and AF directives and regulations. AFNEWS will make final determinations, if necessary.

## **II. ENTRIES**

- A. Entries must be authorized products prepared for internal information purposes and published during the current contest year.
- B. All entries must contribute to Air Force internal information objectives and meet the highest standards of production, execution, and professional excellence. Products should convey information that helps DOD personnel and families succeed in their jobs and missions.
- C. No single product may be entered in more than one category, except when entered in an individual category and as part of a submission for the Air Force Print Journalist of the Year or Outstanding New Writer category.
- D. Entries to all categories must include both electronic and hard copy versions. Stories must be on floppy disk or compact disc in text (txt) format. Photographs must be on disk or CD as PDF copies of the page on which they were published. Newspapers must be provided as PDF copies. Electronic versions must be identical to hard copy products, with no further editing or embellishments applied after initial publication.
- E. Organizations must submit their entries through their respective commands.
- F. MAJCOMs may submit only one entry per category.
- G. All entries must be accompanied by a completed AF Media Contest official entry form (attached in section V). Entries without an official entry form will not be judged.
- H. Entries will not be returned. All winning entries and judges' remarks will be kept by AFNEWS for educational use. Judges' remarks will be distributed electronically to MAJCOM program coordinators.

## **III. CATEGORIES AND ENTRY SPECIFICATIONS**

### **Print Media Categories**

**Category A: Metro Format Newspaper**

**Category B: Tabloid Format Newspaper**

**Category C: Magazine Format Publication**

**Category D: Newsletter Format Publication**

Specifications for categories A, B, C, and D:

1. Enter two issues. Submit six copies of each issue. The first issue should be dated March 14, 2003. If no issue was published on that date, enter the issue published immediately prior to March 14. The second issue may be any published during the contest year.
2. Submit electronic copies as PDF files.

3. These categories must be entered as a unit entry.

4. Judges will not consider non-editorial differences in products, such as full color printing, paper stock weight, etc.

**Category E: News Article.**

**Category F: Feature Article.**

**Category G: Commentary.**

**Category H: Sports Article.**

Specifications for categories E, F, G, and H:

1. Only individuals may enter these categories.

2. Submit a certificate of authenticity from the responsible public affairs officer for entries that were published without a byline.

3. Enter a tear sheet with one example per category. Mount entries on 11" x 14" boards. Entries may be folded to fit. Delete all photographs and line art.

4. Submit electronic copies as text files.

**Category I: Series.**

Specifications for category I:

1. This category may be entered as an individual award if one person wrote all elements of the series or as a unit award if more than one person contributed.

2. Entries must include two or more feature articles dealing with a common theme. The articles must have been clearly identified in the original publication as parts of a series that appeared sequentially in two or more issues of the publication.

3. Follow the same specifications as entries to categories E, F, G, and H above, except units may submit entries to which more than one individual contributed.

**Category J: Stand-Alone Photograph.** Entry must be published, stand-alone photograph, with cutline.

**Category K: Photojournalism.** Entry must include photographs, cutlines and story by the same photojournalist. All elements will be judged.

Specifications for categories J and K:

1. Only individuals may enter these categories.

2. Photographs may be entered in only one category.

3. Enter a tear sheet with one example. Do not enter original photos. Entries must be mounted on 11" x 14" boards. Entries may be folded to fit.

4. Submit electronic copies as PDF files.

**Category L: Contribution by Contractor/Stringer (Writer).** This award recognizes the single outstanding contribution in writing (as defined in categories E through I) by an individual contract writer or stringer for a military publication.

**Category M: Contribution by Contractor/Stringer (Photographer).** This award recognizes the single outstanding contribution in photography (as defined in categories J and K) by an individual contract photographer or stringer for a military publication.

**Category N: Deployed Publication.**

1. Enter two issues. Submit six copies of each issue. The first issue should be dated Aug. 22, 2003. If no issue was published on that date, enter the issue published immediately prior to Aug. 22. The second issue may be any published during the contest year.

2. Submit electronic copies as PDF files.

3. These categories must be entered as a unit entry.

4. Judges will not consider non-editorial differences in products, such as full color printing, paper stock weight, etc.

**Category O: Not used.**

**Category P: Web-based Publication.** An Internet or intranet publication, hosted on the military Internet domain (.mil), that presents news and information to an internal audience.

Specifications for Category P:

1. Content and design must be produced primarily by public affairs personnel.

2. The publications must conform to DOD and Air Force internal information, security review and web instructions and regulations.

3. The publication must have been in existence for a minimum of three months during the program year, and must be updated on a regular schedule (daily, weekly, etc.).

4. The publication will be judged as it exists on the date the judging takes place.

5. Only units (not individuals) may enter this category.

6. Units must provide the publication URL and any necessary logon information.

**Category Q: Outstanding New Writer.** This award recognizes active duty enlisted personnel for work of great promise performed during the individual's first year as a journalist. Judging specifications will be the same as for category R.

**Category R: Air Force Print Journalist of the Year.** This award recognizes the journalist who exemplifies the highest standards of military print journalism as shown by writing across a spectrum of categories.

Specifications for Categories Q and R:

1. Only individuals may be entered in these categories.
2. A letter of nomination must accompany each entry. Nominations must include a one-page biographical sketch of the individual.
3. Entries must include tear sheets with five writing examples by the same individual. Entries must include examples from at least three of the five individual writing categories (E, F, G, H, and I). For example : two sports articles, two news articles and a commentary.
4. Submit a certificate of authenticity from the responsible PAO for articles that were published without a byline.
5. Entries must be tear sheets mounted individually on 11" x 14" boards. Entries may be folded to fit. Delete all photographs and line art.
6. Submit electronic copies as text files.

#### IV. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

*Note the instructions on the bottom of the form before you begin entering information.*



03 Media Contest  
Print Entry Form.doc

**\*\*Once you open the entry form, you should select *File, Save Copy As*, and choose a location to save the form separate from this SOP. Then open the copy.**

- A. One entry form must be filled out for each entry. Submit an electronic copy as a Word document and a printed copy of each form. Do not attach the printed copies to the entries.
- B. All information for an entry must be contained on a single form. Ensure the form does not extend past one page.
- C. All blanks on the entry form must be filled in. "N/A" is not an acceptable entry.
- D. Type of award: Individual awards are for products created by a single person. Unit awards are for products created by more than one person.
- E. Location: The unit, base and state.

F. Use full names (**no nicknames**) as you wish them to appear on award plaques and certificates. **Unit names must be spelled out -- no abbreviations.** For unit awards, the unit, or duty section, or publication name, etc., must be entered as it should appear on an award.

G. Electronic copies should have the “//signed//” designator and a name listed for “Supervisor’s signature and printed rank and name.”

#### **REMINDER**

*If an entry is a Unit submission, that unit name is what goes in the “Plaque should go to” block on the entry form. Individuals who played a role in the production of the product are listed on the entry form in the “Contributors” block.*

*If an entry is an Individual submission, that individual is listed in the “Plaque should go to” block on the entry form. No other contributors are allowed and the “Contributors” block is left empty.*

#### **V. MAILING INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINE**

A. One package per command.

B. Each package must include an entry form for each entry and a transmittal letter.

C. Send print entries to HQ AFNEWS/NSOP, Attn: Media Contest, 203 Norton Street, San Antonio, Texas 78226-1848. They must arrive **NO LATER THAN 13 FEB 2004.**

D. ALL ENTRIES NOT RECEIVED BY 13 FEB 2004 WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.

#### **VI. JUDGING CRITERIA**

A. MAJCOMs will judge their entries and select the best entry in each category for submission to the Air Force contest.

B. Entries will be judged on professional excellence, originality and support of internal information themes and objectives. Judges will score entries on content, writing, design, mechanics, leads and bridges, the body, photo selection, photo editing and overall effectiveness. To see the score sheets used by the judges each year, see the contest Web site at

<http://www.afnews.af.mil/internal/mediacontest/2002contest/rules.html>.

## **VII. AWARDS**

- A. Awards may be made in 18 print categories.
- B. There are two types of awards: individual and unit, each with 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-place finishers.
- C. No award will be made in a category if the judges decide no entry meets program standards.
- D. Individual 1st-place winners will receive plaques and letters of commendation from SAF/PA. The winner of the Air Force Print Journalist of the Year category will receive the Eagle of Excellence statuette in lieu of a plaque. The Eagle of Excellence statuette will be presented at an appropriate ceremony as deemed by SAF/PA.
- E. Unit awards are used to recognize a production effort involving more than one contributor. A plaque will be awarded to a unit that wins a category. Certificates will be awarded to the individual contributors.
- F. The number of individuals who may be listed as contributors to a unit entry is limited to eight. MAJCOMs should ensure the submission is limited to those who significantly contributed to the product being entered. List these names under the "Contributors" block on the entry form.
- G. If the judges deem that more than one entry meets the same standards of production, execution and professional excellence, they may award a tie. Those named in a tie will receive equal recognition for that level of award.
- H. Air Force Recognition Ribbon: First-place winners in each individual category of the Air Force Media Contest are eligible to wear the Air Force Recognition Ribbon, in accordance with Air Force Instructions 36-2803 and 36-2805. Units/duty sections or members of services other than the Air Force are not eligible to receive the ribbon. Only one award of the Recognition Ribbon is allowed per individual per contest year.

## **VIII. AFTER ACTION**

- A. SAF/PA will:
  - 1. Provide a list of the winners to the field.
  - 2. Prepare all letters.
- B. AFNEWS will:
  - 1. Prepare certificates and plaques and forward them to the MAJCOM program coordinators for awarding.
  - 2. Forward judges' comments and summary remarks to MAJCOM program coordinators for their use and dissemination.

**Target Dates: 2003 Air Force Media Contest and Thomas Jefferson Awards  
Program Year (Jan 1-Dec 31, 2003)**

**2003**

Dec 31            Program year ends

**2004**

Feb 13            Deadline for submission to AFNEWS

Mar 1-5           Entries in Air Force Media Contest judged

Apr 5             Deadline for TJ submissions of service entries to OASD/PA

Apr 19-23        TJ entries judged

May 3             OASD(PA) announces TJ winners

June 1            Program feedback/judges' comments sent to MAJCOMs

June 16           TJ awards ceremony/awards provided to Services

Attachment 1